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[For information on the efakó-group (cooperative labor group), particularly in the craft guilds, also see category 467--Analyst]

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The cooperative organization of efaké work also enables the group to 467 868.

train its adolescents and to bring them gradually into the system of co-operation. Young boys are employed first in easy auxiliary work, such as working the bellows in blacksmith and glass-work, or the spooling of cotton thread in weaving; sitting all day long in the workshop they learn a good deal from watching; when they are old enough they are given more serious work, which they carry out under the guidance and tuition of the *efakó* head till, eventually, they become fully fledged members of the labour-unit. In most cases the *efakó* work is supplemented by special individual, *bucá*, work. The relation between the two varies widely, with the specific nature of the craft and its productive technique.

BLACKSMITH WORK

The blacksmiths are called *tswata* in Nupe, or sometimes *tswata gbagba*, 'heavy smiths', to distinguish them from the *tswata muku*, the brass- and silversmiths. Nearly every village in Nupe possesses at least one or two blacksmith workshops. In Bida we find three groups of blacksmiths, whole blacksmith 'wards' in fact, each with its cluster of workshops, and each situated in a different *ekpā* of the town. According to tradition the three blacksmith groups are of different origin. One, in the old centre of Bida, *ba nîn*, claims descent from the original group of blacksmiths which was established in Bida when it was still a Beni village. At that time the head of this group, the *Majī Tswata*, the Master of the Blacksmiths, is said to have held authority over all the blacksmiths of Beni country. The blacksmiths living in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter, the smallest of the three groups, came to Bida comparatively late, from Trans-Kaduna. The largest blacksmith group in Bida, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, traces its descent to the blacksmiths of Rabá, the former capital of the kingdom. They came to Bida together with the king and court when Bida became the new capital of Fulani Nupe. As we shall see later, this last group has established itself as the supreme guild authority over the blacksmiths of Bida and all Nupe. The craftsmen of this group call themselves *dokodzaži*, after their head, who bears the title *Dokodza*.[1] 326

Technology

The blacksmith wards of Bida are of very different size; the smallest contains two workshops, the largest seven. In some cases the entrance-hall of the compound in which the families of the craftsmen are living serves also as workshop or forge. But usually the forge is in a separate hut which stands by itself a small distance from the compound; with its three or four wide doors, and the many small window-holes let into the wall to serve as passage for the smoke from the forge, the workshops can be easily identified. Inside are two furnaces, each screened in by an angular mud wall, about 3 feet high. On the inner side of the screen, facing the open fire, sits the blacksmith himself; on the other side of the

[1] It is interesting to note that the modern Emirate of Patigi, where the descendants of the old Nupe dynasty are reigning to-day, also possesses its group of 'royal blacksmiths', under another *Dokodza*. They came to Patigi together with the family of the present rulers, from Gbara, the ancient residence of this branch of the Nupe dynasty.

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326 screen another man is sitting, who works the bellows. The bellows are of the split-bag type common in Northern Nigeria; they are made of two bags of goatskin which end in a clay tube and are worked with sticks fixed on the top of each bag. The clay tube is buried in the ground and, passing underneath the screen, ends in the shallow furnace on the other side. In this furnace charcoal is burned, which the blacksmiths make themselves. They also forge their own working tools (apart from a few European tools, hammers and files, which have strayed into some of the blacksmiths' huts): a club-shaped hammer, a long pair of tongs, and a few chisels and pointed rods. The anvil, too, is of their own production; it is a solid piece of iron, shaped like a toadstool, the foot of which is buried in the ground. Of other working implements there is a bowl of water in which the red-glowing iron is tempered, and a heap of fine ashes in which the finished product is left to cool.

The technical process is simple. The bulk of crude iron is held over the fire until it becomes red hot and pliable. It is then placed on the anvil and gradually hammered into shape. The change from furnace to anvil is repeated several times, until the object has been given its final shape. Sometimes it is finished off with the help of files and chisels. The main products of the Nupe blacksmiths to-day are blades for hoes, bush-knives and crude axes, big nails and hooks for the big plank doors of the Nupe houses, and small brackets used in canoe-building. Sometimes the blacksmiths also make the wooden handles for hoes and axes; sometimes the customers prefer to buy only the blade and to make their own handles. One man, I found, can produce two hoe-blades a day, working from 9 a.m., with a pause for the midday meal, till 4 p.m., when the Nupe working-day finishes.

Iron-work thus involves four subsidiary forms of production: the manufacture of the bellows, of charcoal, of the tools, and finally of the raw material used in blacksmith work, i.e. the mining of iron ore. With the exception of the last all are undertaken by the blacksmiths themselves. The blacksmith buys the goatskins on the market and sews them together into the skin-bags used as bellows; he also produces the mouthpiece of clay for the bellows. Ordinary tools, such as hammers and tongs, are made by every worker individually; should it become necessary, however, to replace the anvil, the whole group of blacksmiths in the quarter (forty in all) would have to work together.

326 372 In charcoal-burning two or three men who share the same workshop work together, and produce a store which is to last the whole workshop for some time. Charcoal is burned in a clearing in the thick bush at some distance from farms and habitations. Wood of two different kinds may be used. Pieces of timber of about arm's length are piled 3 feet high. A thick layer of grass is placed on the top, and the whole heap is covered with sand, leaving only a small hole open. A dry piece of wood is lit and pushed into the opening to kindle the fire inside, after which the hole, too, is covered up, and the heap is left to burn for five or six days.

326 The production of the raw material of blacksmith work deserves special description. Formerly all iron used in blacksmith work was

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mined and smelted in the country. The production of native iron ore has been greatly reduced in recent years. To-day a large proportion of the crude iron is bought from the European stores—the Nupe call it *kansana*, 'dry iron', to distinguish it from the native mined *nyenkpa žiko*, 'black iron'. The competition of cheap European iron has made the upkeep of the large native foundries unprofitable; many have been abandoned and allowed to fall in disuse, and even where they are still in use only two or three out of perhaps six furnaces are still workable. But in the busy season, shortly before the rains, when everybody needs hoes and axes, the supply of European iron frequently runs out, and the resulting shortage has to be relieved by calling on the supplies of native-mined iron ore. Nupe iron-smelting can, in fact, no longer meet heavier or more regular demands, although many Nupe farmers still prefer a hoe made of native-mined iron—it is stronger, and lasts better, they say; European iron is fit only for repairs, for patching hoe-blades, &c. The tools of the blacksmiths and, above all, the anvil, are invariably made of native-mined iron.

The iron-ore miners, called *edudaciži* (meaning 'workers in the deep'), form a professional group distinct from the blacksmiths, although some of them are blacksmiths as well as iron-ore miners. The mining is done on the slopes of the low flat-topped ferriferous hills of the country. I have heard of five different mining places: near Mokwa, near Shari, near Patigi, near Kutigi, and near Pichi (about 8 miles from Bida). I have seen only two; one in work, though on a reduced scale (near Pichi), and one abandoned (near Shari). The iron-ore foundry near Pichi is the largest in existence. Like the blacksmith groups in the districts round Bida the iron-ore miners of Pichi submit to the authority of the guild-head of the blacksmiths in Bida. His authority goes so far that, five years ago, he could order two additional furnaces to be built in order to increase the Bida supply of iron ore; these new furnaces, however, are no longer in use.

The ore is scratched off the surface of the hill or dug out of shallow pits. Close to the hill-side are the furnaces in which the iron ore is smelted. Three furnaces are placed side by side under a large grass roof which protects workers and 'machinery' from sun and rain. It will be best to describe the very elaborate arrangement by means of two diagrams, the first of which represents a bird's-eye view of the furnaces, and the second a vertical section through a furnace. We have first, a large pit, 6 feet square and 6 feet deep. On one side a pot for water is let in the ground; on the other the furnace proper is erected. It consists, above ground, of a kind of chimney (*a*) made of thick clay, 5 feet high, built over the mouth of an airshaft (*b*) which serves both as ventilator and as opening for the fuel and the iron ore. On the other side of the chimney are the two bellows (*c*), clay tubes formed somewhat like horns, the wide mouth of which is covered with goatskin. The narrow bottom ends of the bellows tubes are joined, under ground, with a long straight clay tube (*d*), a little over 5 feet long, which is fixed in position by means of wooden wedges. It opens into a cave-like space which forms an extension of the square pit. On the bottom of this space the iron ore is

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placed, with charcoal piled over it. The 'cave' (*e*) is connected, by means of a narrow airshaft, with the mouth of the chimney (*b*). Cave and square pit are separated by a semi-circular clay plate (*f*), 1½ feet high, which is cemented into the opening so that it leaves only a small triangular hole open at the bottom. Through this hole the slag pours into the pit. One worker sits on a crude wooden bench which is supported by a timber structure (*g*), behind the bellows; he is relieved every hour. Other workers, two or three in number, act as stokers, feed the furnace with fuel and iron ore, and remove the slag by means of a long wooden stick with iron points, so that the small hole in the clay plate should be kept open. The iron ore is broken into small pieces by means of stones or hammers before it is placed in the furnace. The smelted ore remains behind the clay plate until the whole process is finished; then the clay plate is broken and the iron removed. The clay plate has to be made new and fixed in position every time the furnace is put to use. With the furnace all prepared, a lump of iron of the size of a large yam fruit can be produced in five to six hours' work.

We have already seen that the organization of blacksmith work and iron-ore mining (as of all guild-organized craft-work) involves two different types of co-operation, the actual working together of the labour or *efakó*-unit, and the wider co-operation in the framework of the occupational unit, the guild itself. We will examine first the composition of the labour-unit.

The men whom we find working in the same workshop are all related and belong to the same family group or section of the family group. The common workshop does not, however, invariably establish the labour-unit; the workshop group is the wider unit, for the men who occupy the same workshop are not necessarily also co-workers in the narrow sense. The labour-unit itself corresponds to the small individual family or section of the family—a father and his sons, or a number of brothers, who divide all work among themselves and in certain respects share the proceeds. All more important work is regarded as *efakó* work, i.e. the family head buys the raw material and receives the proceeds from the work carried out by his group. Less important work, mainly small repairs of hoes or axes, is regarded as *bucá*, and the money received for it belongs to the individual worker. Only adults, however, practise *bucá* work; small boys who are yet too young to carry out serious blacksmith work are assigned the work of blowing the bellows. In workshops where there are no young boys, the adult workers may take the bellows in turn; occasionally a woman, the wife of one of the blacksmiths, may help out.

The relation between these various units, workshop group, family group, and *efakó* group, is involved and variable. It will be best to illustrate it with actual examples. The first two are taken from the largest blacksmith group in Bida, the *Dokodza* people. In one of their workshops we find two adults and two boys working together—the boys blowing the bellows. They all belong to the same family and live in the same house. The two adults are brothers, and the two boys the sons of the elder brother. The four workers form a single labour-unit, under

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326 592 the elder of the two brothers, who is *efakó* and family head in one. His younger brother practises *bucá* work in addition to the family work. In another smithy (the smithy of the guild-head himself) we find five men sharing the workshop. They belong to the same family and live in the same house; their common family head is the *Dokodza*, the guild-head. The workshop group is divided into two labour-units. One, consisting of three men, is headed by the *Dokodza*'s younger brother, who works together with his two sons; the other, consisting of two men, the sons of the *Dokodza*, is headed—nominally—by the guild-head himself; being an old man he leaves the actual work to his sons. Each of the workers also has his own *bucá* work.

In the other blacksmith groups, especially in the villages, we find a more loosely knit co-operative organization with much smaller labour-units. In a workshop of the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I found four men working together, two adult brothers and the two young sons of one of the brothers. The kinship configuration is thus the same as in our first example; but here the workshop group is divided into two labour-units, one formed by the father and his sons, and the other, a 'one-man-unit', by the man's brother. Among the Kutigi blacksmiths one workshop numbered four men. They were two brothers and two more distant relations (a father's brother's son and a father's brother's grandson). The workshop was divided into four labour-units, each man working on his own. It will be seen that in these last two examples the division between *efakó* and *bucá* work has disappeared.

In addition to the craft the blacksmiths as a rule also practise a little agriculture on the farm-plots close to their houses, where they grow a few crops 'for the mouth'. These farm-plots are tended mostly by the old men of the family, who can no longer carry on the heavy work in the smithy. The crops belong to the family head, and are regarded as *efakó* property.

Blacksmith work, closely associated as it is with the requirements of agriculture for which it produces the main tools, is subject to the same market fluctuations. It has its busy season in the early rains, and is slack during the dry season. From December to February, the quietest season of the year, one smithy in Bida was producing four hoes a month; other workshops were doing only minor repairs. For two months, during the planting season (May and June), the same smithy turned out four hoes a day. At that time of the year the blacksmiths lay in a large store of hoe- and axe-blades, which is quickly disposed of in the village markets, while during the dry season they must often send their wives to the surrounding villages and hamlets to find customers for their products.

326 434 435 Let us examine the question of profits and cost of production. A blacksmith buys, for example, a lump of iron ore for 2*s.*; this quantity is sufficient for the making of six heavy or ten light hoes, which he sells at the price of 6*d.* and 1*s.* a-piece respectively, exclusive of the handle (which would be another 1½*d.*). On one hoe he makes a profit of between 2*d.* and 3*d.* In the busy season, when the blacksmiths have their hands full with work, the prices go up. A hoe which would be sold for 6*d.* in the dry season fetches 8*d.* in the rains, and one that would be sold for 1*s.*

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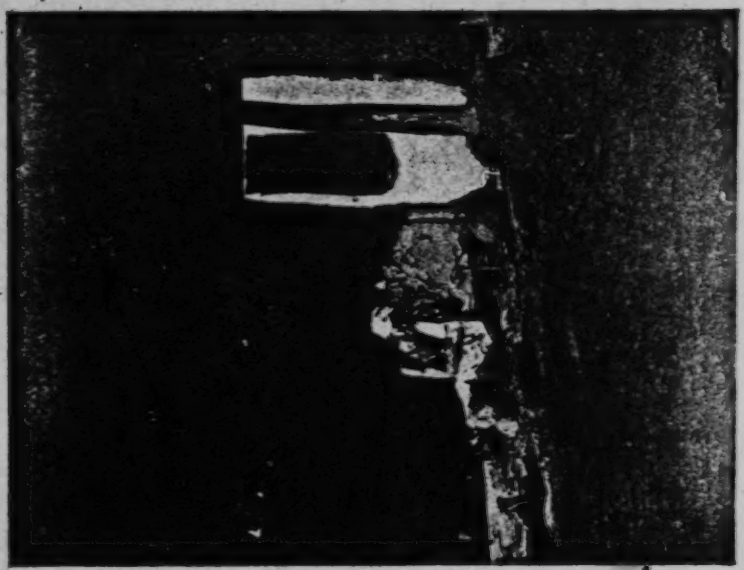
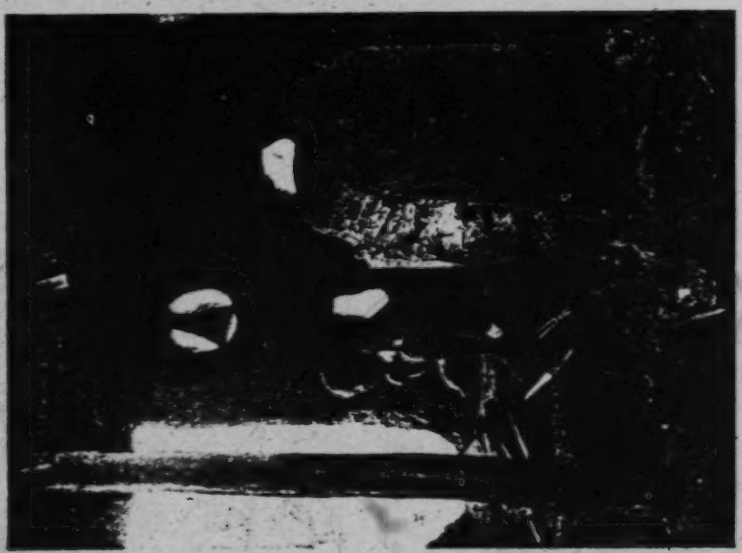


SILVERSMITH



BLACKSMITH

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in the dry season will sell for 1*s.* 4*d.* in the rains. In these two busiest months of the year, then, the profits of the blacksmiths may be as much as 7*d.* on every hoe, or over 1*s.* a day (one man can produce two hoes a day). The blacksmiths of the *Dokodza* group in Bida seem very satisfied with their economic situation. But the blacksmiths in the country, and also the blacksmiths of the other, smaller, guild sections in Bida, are bitterly complaining of the decline of native blacksmith trade. Some of these country blacksmiths have turned farmers, or have at least taken up farming on a larger scale than formerly, in order to balance the losses of their industry. This retrograde movement is due to a variety of causes. One which has affected all blacksmith groups in the country equally, is the competition of European trade. Thus the Nupe blacksmiths have lost almost their entire trade in bush-knives to the European trading-stores; nor does the once very extensive trade in Bida hoes which the Hausa caravans used to take north exist any more. The iron smelters have suffered most severely under this competition. As we have seen, their work has been almost completely disorganized under the pressure of European competition. Other causes affect the blacksmiths in the country more than in the town, and smaller groups more than larger. The scarcity of money among the peasants has forced certain farmers in Kutigi, for example, who were unable to pay in money for the hoes which they needed, to offer a half-day's work on the farms of the blacksmiths in lieu of payment.[1] Closer intercourse and the increased facilities of transport between town and country have also deflected some of the former custom of the village blacksmiths to Bida, where, owing to the presence of the European trading-stores, there is less danger of a shortage of raw iron occurring in the busiest time of the year. A final, more subtle, cause of the decline in blacksmith trade, which attacks smaller groups more severely than larger, lies in the failure of the former to meet successfully the demands of what we have called 'maintenance of labour'. This influence will become clear when we examine the second aspect of co-operation in native industries, namely, the co-operative organization of the professional group at large.

Guild Organization

The term 'guild' is applied correctly only to the Bida blacksmiths, whose organization shows the characteristic features of the guild system —the closed profession, centralized control, the hierarchy of ranks and grades. However, the individual blacksmith groups in Nupe, in Bida as well as in the villages, are all modelled on very similar lines—although the guild sections in Bida are organized on a larger scale, and also more closely and efficiently. Moreover, the control of the Bida guild system extends in certain respects over the whole country and the various independent local blacksmith groups. This widest professional unit is the result of political rather than economic factors; it is expressed mainly in

[1] Prices in the country are higher than in Bida. In Kutigi a heavy hoe is sold for 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* The difference in price seems chiefly due to the fact that the Kutigi blacksmiths must obtain their iron through middlemen who bring it from Bida, as there is no European store in the village.

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the allegiance to a common head, the master of the *Dokodza* section in Bida. As this group of Bida blacksmiths is associated, historically, with Nupe kingship its head also holds his rank and position by appointment of the king of Nupe. The *Dokodza* claims that the blacksmiths in the whole of Nupe 'must obey him' in all matters concerning the profession. As an external expression of this allegiance he receives annually, at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*, a gift of crude iron ore from the various blacksmith groups of the country. Although this gift has now been abandoned the village blacksmiths still acknowledge (at least in theory) the supreme position of the guild-head in the capital, and never fail to pay their respects to him when they are in Bida. In return they count on his help and influence if they are in need of official intervention in the capital or at the court. The closeness of the co-operation under the guild-head, and the efficiency of his control over his fellow craftsmen, increases with the nearness to Bida, till, in the town, it takes the form of guild organization in the strict sense of the word.

The most effective unit, however, is not the guild at large, but the single guild section. The people of each group are of one *dengi*, one kinship group, related both by descent and frequent intermarriage. Every male born into the group is expected to become a blacksmith—'how can he become anything else', said my informants; 'we know no other job'. But, on the other hand, they would maintain that no man from outside could become a blacksmith. When I asked the *Dokodza* people why this should be so, they answered with a laugh: 'How can anyone who was not born a blacksmith become one?' Nevertheless, in another part of the town I discovered a man who, born of a family of traders, had adopted the profession of a blacksmith. He seemed to have been a rather more unruly youth than the rest of the family; for he had firmly declined to become a trader, like them; he had first studied the Koran and thought of becoming a Mallam, but later changed his mind, and decided to become a blacksmith: he 'liked it better' than either trading or studying. Certain maternal relations of his were Beni blacksmiths in a village near Bida. There he went, stayed with them for some years till he had learned the trade, and then returned to Bida, where he is now keeping a little workshop of his own in the entrance hut of the house of his paternal relations. Among the Beni blacksmiths in Bida I was told that formerly apprentices were taken regularly. The pupils came mostly from villages near Bida, and returned to their home as fully fledged craftsmen. The training took from three to five years, during which time the apprentice lived in the house of his master. No money was taken for the tuition, but after the completion of the apprenticeship the parents of the pupil sent a present of food and kola-nuts. Adoption into the profession went hand in hand with adoption into the guild, and the new craftsman would regard himself as a member of the guild section in which he was apprenticed. However, there have been no adoptions into the craft for many years now.

Each guild section has its own titled head and, besides, one or two other ranks which are bestowed on the family heads of the other large family groups in the section. The position of the head of the guild

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section is taken in rotation by these families, the 'second-in-command' succeeding to the position of the head at his death. Among the *Dokodza* people we find a threefold elaborate hierarchy which settles the succession even to the rank of the 'second-in-command': *Dokodza*, *Dokpa*, and *Shaba Dokpa* (lit. Successor of *Dokpa*). The smaller blacksmith section of the Bida Beni possesses two ranks: *Majī Tswata* and *Shaba Tswata*. The blacksmith groups in the villages, and also the groups of iron-ore miners, have similar rank systems.[1] The heads of the blacksmith groups, and to a lesser extent the other guild ranks, are respected, and their orders are obeyed by all co-workers. The main significance of their position lies in the fact that it is their task to organize all co-operative work within the group.

Co-operation and mutual assistance within the section takes many different forms. If the people of one workshop, for example, are unable to fulfil a certain order, they pass it on to another workshop; or if the occupants happen to be absent when a customer calls, their neighbours will always be ready to take the order on their behalf. When the workshops ran short of iron ore, the guild-head used to send messengers to the iron-ore miners to bring back a sufficient supply for the whole group; this form of co-operation, however, no longer exists, and to-day each workshop procures its own raw material. Co-operation of a more far-reaching order is concerned with the various tasks which we have placed under the heading of 'maintenance of labour'. We have already seen that these tasks involve co-operation and mutual assistance on a scale which transcends in varying degree the *efakó*-unit. Thus the division of labour in the preparation of charcoal implies co-operation of the whole workshop group. When it becomes necessary to forge and put up a new anvil an even larger group must co-operate in active work. We may add that the upkeep of the workshop itself, or the building of furnaces—especially the large furnaces used by the iron-ore miners—demands a co-operation much larger than that which the *efakó* group can provide. In none of these cases is the co-operation recompensed with a share in the profits (as is the case in *efakó* co-operation); nor is this co-operation organized on the basis of collective work of the *egbe* type; nor can it be explained, finally, by the fact that the co-workers may belong to the same family and household. Rather is it a co-operation based on membership of the same professional union—the guild or guild section—and mobilized by the appointed head of the group.

The head of the guild section is also responsible for maintenance of labour in a wider sense. His professional advice may be sought by all workers in the group if they have some difficult or unusual work in hand. He will also occasionally lend his people money if they need it for professional purposes (e.g. the purchase of crude iron ore), in other words, he provides them with the necessary working capital. Certain similar services towards the group are vested in the position of the *Dokodza* alone, that is, of the head of the guild at large. He arbitrates in all internal disputes among the blacksmiths of Bida, and is thus able to

[1] See chart of Village Ranks, p. 57.

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prevent friction in his body of workers. He is also the agency through which important large orders reach the group. On a smaller scale this task also falls to the heads of the other blacksmith groups. But in the case of the guild-head it gains special significance; for these 'royal blacksmiths' worked for the largest customer of the country, the Nupe court. They could be certain of a constant large demand, e.g. for tools for the farm-hands working for the king, or various iron implements needed in the royal household, for horse bits and stirrups for the king's horses, or flint-locks for the guns of the bodyguard. These orders are given by the king or court officials to the *Dokodza*, who then distributes the work among the craftsmen of his group according to their capacity and skill, or, if the order proves too large, among the workers in other guild sections as well. The *Dokodza* also receives the payment for this work, and keeps the largest share; the rest of the money is divided equally among the whole guild section, whether they have been working on this particular job or not.[1] These royal orders have been greatly reduced recently, not only because many of the implements needed are obtained nowadays from the European stores, but also because many of the requirements of the royal household are now catered for by the Public Works Department in Bida. But when the present *Etsu* built his new house, in 1935, he ordered nails and brackets for all doors from the *Dokodza* people.

The part played by the guild-head (and to a lesser extent by the sectional heads) in providing labour and capital for his group explains the authority which he exercises over his fellow workers, and also his ability to act in certain circumstances as their 'financier'. On the other hand, the close co-operative organization of the guild section reveals itself as a device to meet these regular demands upon the production of the group. Here we can attempt to explain why the smaller guild sections in Bida (and similarly the village groups of blacksmiths) have suffered more severely under modern economic changes than did the *Dokodza* group. The size of the groups is itself significant. Only the privileged group of the 'royal blacksmiths' evolved a large-scale professional organization; the other groups, which did not have the same access to constant large-scale demands upon production, remained small, and more loosely organized. Now, we can assume that these smaller groups also obtained formerly a sufficient demand for their products from various sources. It may also be that their sources have failed sooner, and more completely, than the source with which the *Dokodza* people could reckon—the continued orders from the royal household are evidence of this. But these unequal changes are less significant in their direct effect upon production (which may be negligible)[2] than in their indirect effect,

[1] How, on the other hand, the authority of the guild-head can be adapted to new situations is illustrated in the following instance. When I went to inspect the furnaces of the iron-ore miners near Bida, I had to obtain a guide through the *Dokodza*. On our return to Bida the guide at once showed the money which I had paid him to the guild-head; though he was allowed to keep it he could not have done so without first informing the guild-head, who could have deducted a part of the money.

[2] The order for nails and brackets for the royal house which we mentioned above brought in only 2*s.* and a gift of food.

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through the medium of labour organization. The royal orders, though at present small and irregular, still mobilize the group organization of the *Dokodza* people in the traditional way. The general weakening of the guild organization brought about by recent economic and political changes, which is clearly visible in the decline of the authority of guild-head and sectional heads, has thus affected the largest and strongest group less than the smaller, and already weaker, guild sections. In their case the group organization has, in fact, been reduced beyond the margin of safety. We have seen that Nupe blacksmith work demands comparatively large group co-operation for a successful maintenance of labour (in all its aspects). In a weakened organization, a markedly reduced co-operative group, maintenance of labour becomes increasingly difficult. This is what happened in the case of the smaller blacksmith groups. And this difficulty, while not sufficient in itself to disrupt the labour organization, would yet weaken its resistance to the effects of economic change—a decline in trade, the competition of European goods—effects which (at least for the time being) have passed by the larger and more strongly organized section.

We can quote several instances of this: the division of labour which enables a workshop, say, of four men, to continue work while two of the men prepare charcoal is impossible in a small working unit, and a valuable working day, possibly in the busiest time of the year, must be sacrificed. Or a workshop may have to interrupt its work when iron ore runs out and new raw material has to be fetched from the iron-ore miners—a task which, in large-scale co-operation, can be performed by one man for a number of workshops without deranging the work of the group. I have even witnessed cases in which work had been interrupted, or reduced to small repairs, because the workers had no money to buy raw materials; in a large co-operative group money would have been found more easily, especially with the help of the guild-head. In Kutigi I saw one of the two local blacksmith workshops left dilapidated for a whole year because the workers could not muster sufficient labour. The most conspicuous example of all is that of the iron-ore miners who had let their means of production, their furnaces, fall into disuse.

BRASS- AND SILVERSMITHS

The Nupe brass-smiths—*tswata muku*—reside almost exclusively in Bida. The only place outside Bida where brass-smiths have settled is Kacha, the rich trading-place, where these craftsmen from Bida hoped to find a profitable market. There are two groups of brass-smiths in Bida, one in the quarter of *Etsu* Masaba and one in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. The latter has lost its former importance. In technical skill both groups are equal, as I could test for myself; as regards work and design of the traditional type the group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter seems the more efficient. Yet its decline, unmerited though it was, is not difficult to understand. It was partly due to political factors. The group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter flourished during the régime of *Etsu* Bello, who was of the dynasty associated with this part of the town, and also under *Etsu*

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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326 Mohamadu before him, whose royal residence was not far from the brass-smiths' quarter. Here, as in many other instances, the invaluable royal patronage was extended primarily to the craftsmen living in the part of the town traditionally associated with the dynasty. With the change of the dynasty the royal patronage changed also, and under the late *Etsu* Saidu, of the house of Masaba, the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter captured the largest and most lucrative trade. A contributory cause lies in the lay-out of modern Bida. The motor-road to the centre [361] of Bida and the big market leads through the street of the brass-smiths in the Masaba quarter, while the other brass-smiths' group is situated in an obscure corner of Bida, away from roads and markets. Now, the brass- and silver-ware manufactured in Bida consists to a large extent of ornaments for men and women and other 'luxury' objects. A large pro- [339] portion is intended for export, and certain goods are even made specially for tourists and European 'curio'-hunters. In either case the nearness of the big trading centre and the main thoroughfare of the town, with its opportunity for display and for attracting customers, must prove an advantage which is denied to the other, almost inaccessible, group of craftsmen.

The character of this luxury industry also explains its concentration in Bida. Its products find their way to villages and peasant districts as well. But a constant and large-scale demand exists only in the capital. Moreover, the concentration of this industry is, in sophisticated Nupe, a trade-mark of refinement and value, and a guarantee that its products express the latest fashions.

326 The technical equipment of the workshop of the brass-smiths differs
531 in certain important details from that of the blacksmiths. The workshops of the brass-smiths, with their smaller and less smoky furnace, are more often housed in the compound itself, i.e. in the entrance hut. The tools are less heavy and adjusted to the finer technique. European hammers, chisels, and files are used to a much larger extent. The main products of the Nupe brass industry are sword-hilts and daggers,[1] horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles of various kinds, made mostly of beaten brass or copper; bangles and rings, which are cast in open clay moulds of bars of brass or silver or (nowadays) aluminium and then bent and twisted into shape; also hairpins and silver chains. Artistic decoration, especially ornamentation of the surface of these various objects, plays an important part. From old Nupe brass- and silver-work preserved in Bida and in European museums we learn the different styles in decoration which have succeeded each other in the course of the last hundred years. The style in fashion to-day is ornamentation in *pointillé* technique.[2]

The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one or

[1] The blades are old, mostly of German or Austrian manufacture, and have been traded for centuries to Nigeria and Nupe, across the desert, from North Africa.

[2] The oldest style appears to be a fluted design which I have seen on certain brass bowls; a later style which flourished at the end of last century, consisted in embossed ornaments which made special use of the flower motif. The *pointillé* style appears to have come in about 1910.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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The Nupe brass-smiths also practise soldering with tin, and one-er 326 532 439 177

two have specialized in repairs of watches, sewing-machines, and such-like. They also practise a crude technique of *cire-perdue* casting. This technique is applied in the making of a kind of signet-ring, very popular both among men and women, and, by one expert, in the making of small brass figures of animals, which have become quite famous in Nigeria. These figures are traded by many of the itinerant Hausa traders and are bought by Europeans who take them for products of an interesting indigenous art. I cannot prove with certainty that these little figures—*zasāgiži*, as the Nupe call them, 'likenesses of man'—have never had a deeper significance. But I am inclined to think that they have not. They have no place in Nupe culture as it presents itself to us, either as religious symbols or as symbols of wealth (in which form similar figures are used, for example, in Dahomey). I know, moreover, that in the case of the one expert who produces these figures to-day in Bida it was his own enterprising spirit that made him adopt and develop this (for a time at least very profitable) 'tourist industry'. To examine the cultural channels through which the suggestion of this production, the artistic *motif*, has reached Bida, is not part of my present task. I have, however, been able to trace two objects produced by this expert brass-worker to their original source. It is a case of what ethnographers call 'culture borrowing', and is sufficiently interesting to be quoted here. This brass-worker had for some time been producing 'dancing figures', little human figures which, by a clever utilization of stable equilibrium, were made to revolve and 'dance' on a small brass stand without falling off. He got the idea for these figures from a travelling Indian trader, who had shown him pictures of the model and explained the principle to him. He had paid the Indian 2*s.* for the 'lesson' and then proceeded to manufacture similar figures himself. The same brass-worker also produced the figure of a cobra of typically Indian design, which he had copied from a figure he had seen in the house of a European.

The raw material used by the Bida brass-smiths is all imported. The Nupe, it appears, never mined copper, nor knew how to produce the alloy. In pre-European days, I was informed, brass and copper were brought up the Niger from Onitsa and Lagos. To-day copper is obtained from English pennies, and brass from rifle cartridges which Hausa traders buy up in the garrison towns of Nigeria and then sell to the brass-smiths of Bida and other towns. Silver is gained by smelting down silver coins which the brass-smiths procure from a Kaduna bank. 326 439

A few examples may illustrate the relation between cost of material and the profit made on the finished article. Brass ladles, an article for which there is great demand in Hausa country, are sold for 3*d.* apiece; for one ladle the brass from twelve cartridge-cases is used, costing 1½*d.*; the brass-smiths can produce two ladles a day, thus making a daily profit of 3*d.* Silver bangles are sold for 12*s.* a pair; the cost of the material is 10*s.*, and the working time from two to three days, allowing a daily profit of 9*d.* to 1*s.* Aluminium bangles, which are made to cater for the cheaper tastes, are sold in large quantities to traders and middlemen; half a dozen, which can be produced in one day, are sold for 2*s.*; the material (bought in sheets at the European store) costs 1*s.* 6*d.*, and the profit per 326 434 435

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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day is thus 6*d*. The little brass animals, four of which can be done in from one to two days, are sold for 2*s*. to 3*s*. apiece; the material comes to only 8*d*. The highest profits are thus made on work that demands special skill, taste, or invention, such as the silver bangles or the brass figures.

Among the brass-workers as among the blacksmiths three or four men, often close relations, share the same workshop. But it happens not infrequently that people who are not relations work together in the same workshop, or that close relations work in different workshops. These are typical examples:

1. In this workshop three old men are working together, two of whom are brothers, and the third a distant relation who lives in a different household.
2. Here we find two distant (maternal) relations, who live in different houses, sharing the same workshop together with a young boy who is the pupil of one of the men.
3. This workshop is next door to 2. In it are working the two brothers of one of the men in workshop 2 together with another man, a distant relation, and a young pupil.
4. This is the largest brass-smith workshop in Bida. It belongs to the head of the guild section, and is shared by the guild-head himself, who, however, does not work there regularly, his two married sons, a married younger brother, and a stranger.

The labour-unit is much smaller than the workshop group, and also smaller than the labour-unit among the blacksmiths. Grown-up or married sons or brothers invariably work on their own, so that the working-unit consists as a rule only of a man and a boy, or frequently of one man only. Thus workshop 1 numbers three one-man labour-units, workshop 2 two labour-units consisting of one man and of one man and his pupil, respectively. In workshop 3 we have three labour-units, two consisting of one man and one of a man and a boy, and in workshop 4 five one-man labour-units. In these small labour-units the difference between *efakó* and *bucá* work must naturally disappear. The explanation for the smallness of the groups lies in the very nature of brass-smith work. It requires much less actual co-operation than the heavy work of the blacksmiths—in most cases, for example, the brass-smith blows the bellows himself. Brass-smith work, with its delicate technique and the large variety of objects which it produces, is also more highly specialized. Certain objects, such as bangles and ladles, are produced by all brass-smiths; but workshop 1 specializes in addition in sword-hilts and daggers; in workshop 2 one of the men produces the brass figures of which I have spoken; the men in workshop 3 are experts in the repair of sewing-machines, and so forth. A craft, finally, which follows fashion so closely and is always on the look-out for new attractive things must foster individual skill and inventiveness rather than collective enterprise.

The guild organization at large also differs in certain essentials from that of the blacksmiths. The training of apprentices plays a much greater part in this prosperous and up-to-date industry. The training is longer and may take up to ten years. After the completion of the period

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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of training the new member of the profession joins one of the workshops in the quarter, while continuing to live in the house of his family. Large-scale co-operation is also of much less significance, since the furnaces are simple and easy to build, since no heavy anvils are used, and the forges mostly situated in the entrance hut of the house. The varied enterprises, and the spirit of 'individualism', render the advice or practical help of the guild-head less important. His organizing influence, however, is still an important factor. When, for example, the Bida brass-smiths first began to produce goods for Europeans, the guild-head took it upon himself to propagate this new profitable enterprise, and at the same time to assist the craftsmen in perfecting their technique. A District Officer who was a keen supporter of native arts and crafts had explained to him the kind of things that Europeans would buy—trays, ash-trays, finger-bowls, and suchlike. The guild-head himself led the way in the new production, and devised a system of guidance for his fellow workers. You can still see scratched into the mud wall of the guild-master's workshop circles, ovals, and squares of different size, which are the outlines of the objects the craftsmen were going to produce; they served as standard measures, and are indeed called by the Nupe *ema*, measure.

There are two ranks in the brass-smith guild, each presiding over one section: the guild-master, called *Muku*, and the 'Successor of the *Muku*', the *Shaba Muku*. They are the heads of the two large family groups which are said to have been the earliest representatives of the craft in Nupe and to which most of the brass-smith families trace (at least in theory) their descent. The two ranks are taken in turn by the two family groups. The present guild-master, a very old man, is living in the brass-smith group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter; the *Shaba Muku* is at the head of the more prosperous section in the Masaba quarter. With the growing prosperity of this guild section the authority and influence of the old guild-master have declined, and to-day the *Shaba Muku* is the more influential person. Even the most successful and most 'individualistic' young brass-smiths who have created their own special style treat the head of their guild section with the respect due to his position and experience.

Here, as in blacksmith work, the most important service which the guild-master renders his fellow workers is that of acting as an intermediary between the craftsmen and the court. Here, too, the king of Nupe places all his orders through the *Muku*, who then distributes them among the different workshops. The large orders of former days, for arms, sumptuous horse-trappings, ornaments of many kinds, have disappeared. The costly ornamented bowls, used formerly in every Nupe household of consequence as drinking-vessels or receptacles for food and kola-nuts, have been replaced by enamelled teapots of European or Japanese manufacture. But on a limited scale the court is still the most important customer of the Bida brass-smiths. To recall themselves to the king and to solicit his custom the brass-smiths make him an annual gift of products of their craft which is presented to him at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*. The present which the brass-smiths presented to the new *Etsu* at the first *Sallah* celebrated under his reign was, not unnaturally,

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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especially costly. It was in form of a brass tray for kola-nuts which had been made in the workshop of the *Muku* himself and to the cost of which (6*s*.) every brass-worker had contributed his penny or halfpenny. The *Etsu* accepted the gift with thanks and sent a return gift of a large bowl of kola-nuts (worth 10*s*.), which was distributed among all the brass-smiths of the town. If here the organizing influence of the guild-master becomes again visible, the 'individualistic' element is present also. For, in addition to the collective gift, individual workers are free to send their own personal gifts and to attract the attention of the court to their own particular style and skill. Thus one of the Bida brass-smiths presented the *Etsu* at the Sallah with a covered brass bowl, worth 3*s*. He was rewarded shortly afterwards, when the *Etsu* placed an order for new horse-bits, in European style, with him.

GLASS-WORKERS

The glass-worker guild represents the most strongly organized and most conspicuously self-contained of the Nupe craft-guilds. In the whole of Nupe there exists only one group of glass-workers, the *masagá*, who live in Bida, in a separate quarter of the town which is named after them *masagá fu*, *efu* (quarter) of the glass-workers. They regard themselves almost as a distinct tribal group. They have a tradition that they came originally from Egypt, and brought their art with them from the old home. Their tradition has also preserved the names of the various towns and countries through which they passed on their long journey which took them, eventually, to Gbara, the ancient capital of Nupe kingdom.[1] They had stopped at none of these many towns and villages as they could not find there the kind of earth necessary for the making of glass. They settled then in Gbara, where, as their tradition has it, they arrived at the time of Tsoede. Later, when the kings of Nupe moved their residence to other places, the glass-workers followed the court, to Jima, Lade, Rabá, and, finally, Bida.

The *masagá* obtain their raw material both by making their own glass and smelting down bottles of European manufacture. The latter kind of raw material, easy to obtain, and more attractive because of the variety of colours which it offers, has to a large extent replaced the original native-made glass.[2] Bida women, wives of the *masagá* as well as women from outside, regularly scour the town for empty bottles from European stores, households, offices, and dispensaries (where they can obtain the highly appreciated amber-coloured medicine bottles). Bottles of various kinds from other parts of Nigeria also find their way to the *masagá* quarter, bought up locally and transported to Bida, partly by railway, by the enterprising women traders.

The *masagá* nevertheless still produce their own glass as well. A

[1] My informants mentioned the following towns and countries: the 'land of the Arabs', the 'land of Bornu', Kano, and Zozo (Zaria).

[2] The actual cost of production is lower in the case of native-made glass. But this fact is balanced by the time-saving made possible by the use of bottle glass and also by the greater demand for coloured glass-ware.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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according to Nupe tradition, weaving was not originally a guild-organized craft, but a free profession carried out individually, like mat-weaving, for example, to-day. It became a 'closed profession' and a guild-organized craft when the Nupe kings imported craftsmen from the south, who brought with them their own special technique and who, aliens in Nupe country, kept to themselves, neither intermarrying nor coming much in contact with the rest of the population. These imported groups of weavers were *konú*, freed slaves of war. They form two of the three groups of weavers which we find in Bida to-day. The first is composed of people from Salu, a town in Yagba country, who were settled in Bida by *Etsu* Masaba. The members of this group, which is the largest of the three weaver guilds, live scattered over the whole town; their guild-head, however, used to reside in the *Etsu* Masaba quarter. The second *konú* group is of Yoruba extraction, and is concentrated in the *Etsu* Usman quarter. This group has representatives also outside Bida, in a number of Nupe villages: Kutigi, Enagi, Sakpe, and Dabbā. The third group of weavers, in the *Etsu* Umaru quarter, is composed of Nupe proper. It is a very small group, consisting only of one compound. This Nupe group of weavers forms a section of a large kinship group which comprises farmers, who live outside Bida, as well. They trace their profession to a man who came to Bida from Rabá, as a *bara* of *Etsu* Umaru. Originally a warrior, this man later settled in the town and learned weaving from a *konú* craftsman. At that time, I was told, weaving was a lucrative and highly respected profession. Weaving has been the profession of his family for three generations now, and the family heads are received at the court and treated as official representatives of their group like all heads of guilds or guild sections. Small groups of weavers of Nupe extraction are also found in various villages in the Emirate. Their labour organization closely resembles that of this last group of weavers, but they remain outside the Bida guild system.

The technique of weaving is the same in all groups. Their loom is of the narrow upright type, worked with pedals, which is common all over Northern Nigeria. These looms produce narrow strips of cloth 5 inches wide. The looms are placed in a half-open shed, six to seven in one row, in the inner courtyard of the compound, each loom being worked by one man. The weavers have to buy a large proportion of their tools from other craftsmen: the shuttle and the wooden posts on which the loom rests, and which are frequently beautifully carved and painted, are made by the carpenters; the iron rods used as pedals and the iron bar upon which the finished strips of cloth are wound, are made by the blacksmiths. Only the weaver's reed is produced by the weavers themselves. A complete outfit for one man costs from 6*s*. to 12*s*., according to whether cheap plain or expensive carved wooden posts are used. The Bida weavers use mostly thread of European manufacture, both plain and coloured, and only very rarely native-ginned and -dyed cotton. The village weavers use mostly the latter kind.

The men who occupy a common workshed are members of the same family and household group. In one house, for example, I found

3: Forde E-4 (no date) 1955 FF52 Nupe FF52

INDUSTRIES, CRAFTS, AND PROFESSIONS

467 Industries and crafts are practised for the most part by men in their homes or in attached workshops. Some involve co-operative group production, for which the labour unit is an *efakó*, corresponding to the *efakó* for farm work (p. 26). In most cases such work is supplemented by individual (*bucá*) work. Slave labour was formerly employed. Production is organized in guilds controlled by a guild-head, and thus considerable control is exercised, through the political system, over all the more important industries of the country.

Craft guilds control the mining and smelting of ores, iron-working, brass-working, and silver-smithing, glass making, weaving, bead-work, building, wood-work and carpentry, and butchery. Individual crafts are tailoring and embroidery, leather-work, indigo-dyeing, straw-hat making, mat and bag making, basket-work, rope and twine making. Cloth, mats, bags, rope, and twine are commonly made in many villages, though they appear for sale only in the larger markets. Free professions include bard-doctors, drummers and musicians, and dancers and singers (men and women).

467 325 *Iron-ore workers* are called *edudacuñi*. The mines are on the slopes of the low, flat-topped hills and consist of shallow pits; the smelting furnaces are close by. A large proportion of the iron now used in smithing is bought in bars from European firms, but native-smelted iron is considered superior as it is said to be stronger and more durable. It is regularly used for the blacksmiths' own tools.[32]

467 326 [463] *Blacksmiths* are called *tswata* or *tswata gbagba*. There are one or two workshops in every village, and three " wards " of smiths in Bida. The guild-head lives in Bida and his control extends in certain respects over the whole country. It is a " closed " craft. The forge is generally in a separate hut at some distance from the compound. There are usually three or four workers, who are related, in a unit. The work is mainly *efakó* but there is some *bucá* work, consisting mainly of repairs to hoes, etc. The main products are blades for hoes, bush knives (though these are now mostly bought from the European trading stores), large nails and hooks for building, and the small brackets used in canoe making; blacksmiths also make some of their own tools, hammers, etc. Charcoal required for the furnaces is produced at intervals in quantities by two or three men of one workshop. The early rains are the smiths' busy season.

There are a number of blacksmiths in Basa-Nge District who sell their wares in the Igala markets.[33]

Brass- and silver-smiths work almost exclusively in Bida town where the furnace is often in the entrance-hut of the compound. The materials are obtained by melting down pennies (for " copper "), rifle cartridges and rods (for brass), and silver coins. The main products are brass and copper sword-hilts, daggers, horse-trappings, bowls, jugs, trays, ladles, and receptacles; brass, aluminium, and silver bangles, rings, hair-pins, and chains; signet-rings are made by a crude *cire-perdue* method. Some work is designed specifically for European buyers. The work is largely individual, but there is a system of apprenticeship.[34]

467 286 *Weavers*, known as *edeluciñi*, are found in three guild sections in the three parts of Bida town. Most of them are Nupeized Yoruba. The looms are of the narrow horizontal treadle type producing cloth in strips 5 ins. wide, and of a standard length, approximately 10 yds. They are set up in a row in a half-open shed in the courtyard. The thread is now mostly of European manufacture, native-ginned and dyed cotton being rarely used. Members of the same household occupy a common workshop, but the work is mainly individual (*bucá*). A broad upright loom is used

[32] Nadel, 1942, pp. 257–9, 293–4, 299; Lane, 1947.
[33] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 259–60.
[34] Nadel, loc. cit.; Hopkins, 1934.
[35] Nadel, op. cit., pp. 269–74.

6: Anonymous U-4 (no date)1956
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Crafts of Bida

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IT is something of a shock to find that the traditional glass-making families of Bida, whilst working very much as they always have worked in their own quarter of the town, are now using beer bottles as their raw material. They melt the green and brown bottles from Britain, Denmark, Germany and Holland in the same wood-burning, hand-blown furnaces in which they used to make their own glass "from local sands and stones with a little ash". The romance has been damaged and some interesting technology will soon have been lost; but from the worker's point of view, the change can only be for the better.

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The brass-workers too are finding their materials among "European" scrap, and aluminium is creeping in as the metal for some of the cheaper lines. Yet once the Nupe blacksmiths' groups smelted their own iron in charcoal-fired blast furnaces, force-fed by hand bellows, from ore quarried in the sugarloaf hills which stand up abruptly from the plain around Bida.

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Once, these smiths fashioned the weapons for the raiding parties which, less than one hundred years ago, were able to terrorise both sides of the Niger valley from above Jebba to below the confluence of the Benue.

These military activities were, it seems, the main cause of a system of craft guilds in Bida which appears to have been as complete as any known in mediaeval Europe. Every aspect of production and supply appears to have been strictly controlled by the state to meet the state's requirements. The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery

1 1 [Text continues on p. 141 -- Analyst]

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6: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1956
"King of the dancers" — A Bida brass spinning toy. FF52 Nupe FF52 Bida

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326 [433] The guilds of craftsmen in iron, leather, and embroidery made the weapons, armour, saddle-cloths and accoutrements for the army, the agricultural workers produced food and the glass-makers produced the ornaments which formed a basis of trade when that seemed more worth while than a military operation. As is usual in a state drawing most of its profits from war and plunder, there grew in Bida a great demand for luxuries—ornamental vessels, beads and armlets, especially among the women. Many young men of Bida state, ruefully, that this taste lingers on.

326 178 This guild system was too rigid easily to withstand fundamental changes. The blacksmiths, declining in number, now confine themselves to farm implements and a few furnishings for horsemen. The brass makers turn out a wide range of flat and hollow-ware, much of it coming loosely within the luxury classification. The embroiderers turn out fine [286] hand work on gowns and there is a beautifully decorated, bright red cloth woven by the women; but few are sold outside the town. Makers of hats and mats turn out a range of products now largely aimed at a Europeanised market.

This falling-off of the traditional demand and an (at least) partial failure to find adequate new markets has already resulted in the loss of some skills and is a grave risk to the perpetuation of many others.

327 The glass-makers, however, still work in their traditional way. The furnace is made from a clay pot heavily embedded in more clay. Into the base of the furnace are let two clay pipes of about two inches external diameter. These swell out to become bellows chambers some twelve or fifteen inches across closed by leather bags. One pumps away at them

Text continued on page 143

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Bida

Workers in brass and silver. The goat-skin bellows are similar to those of the glass-makers

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[P. 142]

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Bida

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Punching designs on brass bowls.
No trace of the pattern is made before the punch work starts

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Bida

323 Beads are made similarly, small amounts of molten glass being allowed to fall fixed distances to determine size and shape much as round shot used to be made in Europe.

323 439 This trade is suffering badly now. The products are very cheap, but they are in direct competition with more sophisticated, imported products.

One type of Bida bead *is not* cheap. It is very rare and is said to be made from "a sort of stone found a thousand miles away in the desert, only at one place. It is brought here only by women traders who go to Kano and Zinder to buy it from the desert people and very few know how to work on it". Accurate details are very difficult to come by, but this type of bead is very scarce and still greatly prized.

326 The brass workers fashion all but their most involved shapes on small anvils, beating rhythmically with a very small hammer. The patterns are made with a punch without any preliminary drawing of the intended pattern. As may be expected, the results vary but many are remarkably symmetrical and precise.

Much of the work is carried out in "silver", correctly coloured but bearing about as much likeness to real metal as does the average silver coinage. The Maria Theresa dollar, one of the traditional sources of [439] silver in the North, has been used as far south as Bida but the supply seems to be running out. In some places, craftsmen may be seen making Maria Theresa dollars . . .

Bida metal work is both interesting and disappointing at the same time. The folklore of the Nupe people makes many references to great skill in bronze casting and the Jebba bronzes are there to support the tale (*Nigeria* Magazine No. 43). There appears to be no casting now, though there remains an ability to make thin and very ductile metal sheet in a variety of alloys which can be worked over and over again without harm. Many of these metals have a quite surprising capacity to conduct heat, as anyone casually using a brass ash tray may quickly learn.

There is among the surviving guildsmen of Bida a reservoir of craftsmanship and familiarity with working glass, metals, leather and similar traditional materials. Without outside help, their skills will be lost and their young men will turn to other jobs. Perhaps there can never be an adequate, expanding market for their present products; but with a little help and advice, they could still be of greater value to their town and to Nigeria.